

Publer Henry 3/24/09
Reid 3/3/09
March 19, 2009

Dear House Members:

I submit this testimony in reference to bill no.6533 concerning Advisory Commission for the Dept. of Correction.

On July 15, 1996 to the present I have been serving a 13.5-year sentence. My crimes that I am serving this sentence for is surrounded by a history of drug abuse. The day I was sentenced the judge ordered substance abuse evaluation and treatment.

For years I struggled to get treatment from the Dept. of Correction but was unsuccessful. I would complain to DOC officials only to be told I don't have a right to treatment. Finally I was forced to file civil action to get treatment. See case CV02-0562068 Hanton v. Warden. The court ordered treatment, which was the only way I got what I desperately needed. There are many other individuals in this situation not only with drugs but mental health and education as well but lack the ability to petition the court.

An Advisory Commission is needed because DOC officials view substance abuse, mental health and education as tools of privilege and not of necessity. With an Advisory Commission it can ensure these types of issues are addressed and when complaints need to be filed and addressed it can be done through the Advisory Commission instead of through the courts.

In closing, I pray the House Members seriously consider the bill and bear in mind that there are individuals coming into prison with serious substance abuse, mental health and educational issues, and leaving prison with these issues un-addressed.

James Hanton

NOTE:

This testimony was mailed by Mr. Hanton on March 19, but not sent out from the facility in time for inclusion at the March 24 Judiciary hearing.

We wanted this item to be included as section (e), with the following sections re-lettered accordingly. We will try to have this section added when the bill has a hearing.

(e) Commissioners shall have access to DOC officials, staff, employees and inmates and shall make visits to prison facilities, as needed, to collect factual information.

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